



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 26, 2011

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/apr/news.html>

District Man Sentenced to Five-Year Prison Term For Stabbing Teen Near Northeast Washington Recreational Center - Victim Was Stabbed in the Neck, Severing a Muscle -

WASHINGTON - Dalante Saunders, 20, was sentenced today to five years in prison for attacking and stabbing a teenager in September 2010 near the Turkey Thicket Recreational Center in Northeast Washington, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Saunders, of Washington, D.C., entered a plea of nolo contendere in April 2011 to a charge of assault with intent to kill. Under such a plea, a defendant is convicted of the offense, accepts responsibility, and agrees that the government could prove him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. However, the defendant in such a plea does not admit to the facts of the case.

Saunders was sentenced by the Honorable Ronna L. Beck in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The judge called for Saunders to complete anger management training, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment. Upon completion of his prison term, Saunders is to be placed on three years of supervised release.

According to the government's evidence, on September 30, 2010, Saunders approached the 19-year-old victim, who has special needs, near the recreational center, which is in the 1100 block of Michigan Avenue NE. Saunders engaged the teenager in a conversation about why the victim had not called him. Two others then approached the victim and punched him with closed fists, for no apparent reason. Then two more people punched the victim about the face and body. After these attacks, yet another person joined and punched the victim in the face.

Saunders then joined the other assailants in surrounding the victim. One demanded the victim's wallet, and the victim turned it over. Then Saunders brandished a knife and cut the victim in the neck. Saunders and the other five attackers then left the area.

The victim lost large amounts of blood due to his neck injury. He managed to walk to a convenience store at Hawaii Avenue and Taylor Streets NE, where he called his mother from his

cellular phone. He told her that he had been stabbed. She picked him up from that location and rushed him to Washington Medical Center, where he underwent emergency surgery.

The victim's neck muscle was severed, and he suffered this wound several inches from a vital artery in his neck. It took 22 staples to close the wound in his neck. Moreover, his face was swollen. He remained hospitalized for several days of emergency medical care.

On October 7, 2010, a week after the attack, the victim identified Saunders as the person who stabbed him. Saunders was arrested by the police, and in a videotaped statement, admitted that he had punched the victim and cut him. In its sentencing memorandum, the government noted that Saunders had previous contacts with the victim and should have known that he was vulnerable. The government also noted that Saunders appears to have committed this offense for no reason other than the fact that he had the ability and the opportunity to do it.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen commended those who worked on the case from the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), including Detective Dexter Martin of the Fifth District Criminal Investigation Division, who led the investigation. U.S. Attorney Machen also acknowledged the efforts of Detectives Carla Talley, Steven Manley and Randal Parker, Officers C. Brown, Ronald Laboy, Jeffery Phillips, Donald Smalls, and Crime Scene Technician T. Davis. Finally, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to Paralegal Kalisha Johnson-Clark, who prepared the case for indictment, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Terry Eaton, who conducted the pre-indictment investigation and prosecuted the case.

11-374

###